

Amendment Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.111
Serial No.: 10/539,010
SUGHRUE MION, PLLC Ref: Q88256

REMARKS

Claims 1-22 are pending in the application. By way of this Amendment, Applicants have amended claims 1, 6 and 16-19.

Claims 1-4, 6, 8, 10-12 and 16-20 have been rejected under § 102(b) as being anticipated by Suzuki (U.S. Patent No. 6,443,779). Additionally, claims 5 and 13-15 have been rejected under § 103 as being unpatentable over Suzuki in view of Polgar, et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,902,155). Finally, claims 9, 21 and 22 have been rejected under § 103 as being unpatentable over Suzuki in view of Okabe, et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,375,517).

Applicants note that claim 1 is in independent form with claims 2-22 depending therefrom. Applicants have amended claim 1 to more clearly recite the invention. For example, amended claim 1 more clearly recites that the lock portion 4 is disposed inwardly of an outermost wall surface of the cassette relay block. Furthermore, Applicants have clarified the space in which the relay block is inserted is provided in an attaching “member.”

For the following reasons, Applicants respectfully submits that claim 1 patentably distinguishes claim 1 Suzuki.

The invention is directed to a cassette relay block 1 in which the lock portion 4 (for locking the cassette relay block to an attaching member 2) is disposed inwardly of the outermost wall surface of the cassette relay block, as shown in Figure 1 of the application. Although the Examiner contends that Suzuki teaches this feature of the invention, Applicants respectfully disagree.

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In particular, in the rejection, the Examiner contends that the lock portion 21 of the connector 15 (which he analogizes to the claimed relay block) is disposed “more inside than an outermost wall surface of the cassette relay block”. It is noteworthy that the Examiner has failed to identify the outermost wall surface of the cassette relay block. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection.

More specifically, with reference to Figure 1 of Suzuki, the outermost surface of the connector 15 corresponds to the surface at the end of the connector identified by reference numeral 15. This surface has a locking projection 21 which projects outwardly from the surface. As such, it is clear that this locking projection is actually disposed outside of the outermost wall surface of the connector, in complete contrast to that required by claim 1. Indeed, Applicants respectfully submit that the projection is the outermost portion of the connector 15.

In view of the foregoing, Applicants submit that claim 1 patentably distinguishes over Suzuki.

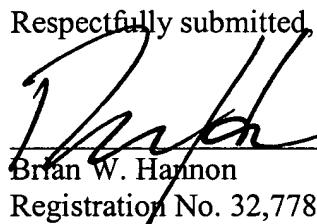
In addition, the dependent claims are patentable based on their dependency from claim 1. Furthermore, Applicants submit that a number of dependent claims are further patentable based on the limitations contained therein. For example, contrary to the Examiner’s assertion, Applicants submit that Suzuki teaches or suggests the limitation recited in claim 3. Specifically, the terminal housing parts of the cassette relay block are not arranged cross-wise with the lock portion surrounded by crossing outer wall surfaces of the terminal housing parts, as claim 3 requires.

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In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,



Brian W. Hannon
Registration No. 32,778

SUGHRUE MION, PLLC
Telephone: (202) 293-7060
Facsimile: (202) 293-7860

WASHINGTON OFFICE
23373
CUSTOMER NUMBER

Date: July 12, 2006